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Basil Thompson

WE announce with sorrow the untimely death of Basil Thompson. Basil Thompson was one of the founders in 1921 of the *Double Dealer* and had been identified with the magazine for the last three years as editor and contributor. He was actively engaged in business yet devoted much of his spare time to the interests of *The Double Dealer*. His work has contributed in great part to the success of the magazine. His death is an inestimable loss.

Primarily a poet he was interested in every phase of literary work. His editorials are perhaps better known to readers of *The Double Dealer* than his verse. Feeling that it was unbecoming an editor to put forward his own creations he was seldom willing to publish his poetry at all. When he did so it was usually under a pen name. The larger part of his best verse has been published in other periodicals, notably *The Century Magazine, The Bookman, The Nation, The New Republic, The Forum, The Lyric, Contemporary Verse, Pearson's Magazine, Smart Set, The Wave, The Poetry Review* (London) and *S 4 N*

He published in 1918, *Estrays,* containing selections of his poems together with those of three other poets, Vincent Starrett, George Seymour, and Thomas Kennedy. In 1919 *Auguries* was printed. This book the author suppressed before publication and very few copies are extant. At the time of his death he had collected a volume for publication containing the best of his later poems under the title "The Grey Men and Other Rhymes."

In prose aside from the editorials which appeared in *The Double Dealer,* Basil Thompson had published stories and essays in various

magazines. He wrote the essay on Louisiana in the Nation's Series "These United States" which series appeared in book form in 1923.

Basil Thompson was thirty-one years old. What fine things he would have done had he lived is a matter of conjecture. His actual accomplishment of the last two years is undeniable. The genuine personal note and the sound artistry of his best work place him securely among the authentic poets of the generation.

In this issue of *The Double Dealer* we are reprinting several of his editorials which appeared unsigned in earlier numbers of the magazine, some poems which were signed in pseudonym, and two essays previously published. We are also printing for the first time a number of poems which he left in manuscript.

We speak here of Basil Thompson as editor and poet. To us who knew him as a man, his end is a personal loss. His was a fine personality and a keen sensibility. We can end this notice in no more fitting manner than by quoting the final stanza of his poem *Peace* from *Auguries*

"Yea, Life spells Strife,
Passion and Pride,
Love and Desire and Dreams—
May these things never be denied
While yet there's breath!
Oh! not I trust,
Till Death,
Shall Striving cease
In Peace!"

JULIUS WEIS FRIEND
JOHN MCCLURE
LOUIS GILMORE

Editorials

SOUTHERN LETTERS

IT is high time, we believe, for some doughty, clear visioned penman to emerge from the sodden marshes of Southern literature. We are sick to death of the treacly sentimentalities with which our well-intentioned lady fictioneers regale us. The old traditions are no more. New peoples, customs prevail. The Confederacy has long since been dissolved. A storied realm of dreams, lassitude, pleasure, chivalry and the Nigger no longer exists. We have our Main Streets here, as elsewhere.

It is no idle conceit to hazard that some Southern Sherwood Anderson, some less tedious Sinclair Lewis, lurks even now in our midst. A writer of the calibre of Thomas Hardy would discover here in Louisiana a native *genre* which easily out-wessexs Wessex—a peculiarly whimsical character and individual color. We do not refer to the Creole or the Nigger. George Cable has treated the former with varying success. His "Grandissimes," "Old Creole Days" and "Doctor Sevier" are great books. Written several decades ago when the Creole was still a dominant figure in the social life of New Orleans, they struck exactly the right note, but today, barring an historical interest, they seem distinctly *passé*.. The Creole has become almost obsolete. Contact, changing conditions, inter-marriage with his Teuton and Anglo-Saxon brother have mongrelized him beyond recognition. Some day some one with the leaning and leisure will sit down and write his swan-song, dubbing it "The Last of the Creoles."

On the other hand, the case of the Nigger in Southern literature is a pathetic one. The poor darkey has been worked and overworked to such an extent that your average reader balks at a "nigger story" in the same manner as the mule balks at the nigger. The day of dialect novels and sketches, despite the excellent work of Ruth McEnery Stuart, Joel Chandler Harris and Octavus Roy Cohen of *Saturday Evening Post* fame, is, we believe passed. Indeed, Mr. Cohen's black-faced comedians seem somehow to smack overly of grease paint and the minstrel show.

But the old rusty machinery can be junked without a qualm. There are hundreds of little towns in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana fairly bubbling with the stuff of stories. Not, necessarily, the Main Street motif, but something far and away more vital to the soil—the physical, mental and spiritual outlook of an emerging people—the soul-awakening of a hardy, torpid race, just becoming reaware of itself. The peoples of the North and East are made, those of the Middle West and West are in the making, the peoples of the South are being remade. It is this remaking that should arrest the literary eye. The old Southern pot-boiler must go out—the lynching-bee, Little Eva, Kentucy Colonel, beautiful Quadroon stuff—a surer, saner more virile, less

sentimental literature must come in. By all the symptoms the reaction is near at hand.

BELLY WORSHIP: SERMON IN LITTLE

EAT, drink and be merry; for tomorrow ye shall die. Isaiah was wrong. For tomorrow, by all the hazards, ye shall live. Ask Gipsy Smith. Ask the Reverend Bryan and Pussyfoot Johnson. Conjure up the shades of Franc Villon, Kit Marlowe, Bill Shakespere and Carrie Nation. Ask Johns, Barrymore and Barleycorn. Ask yourself. Ask me....Brother, what of the morrow's dawn?

Eat, drink and be merry, yes—but remember the morrow. For just as sure as we quick guttle ourselves into comatose ecstasis, just so sure must we quick come out of comatose ecstasis. And, you'll indulge my play, the quicker we go under, the quicker we quick come out. If tomorrow we shall live and we must if we shall, what's the use of making it a more unpleasant tomorrow than nature already plans to make it!

Now for my moral—mind you, this is a moral discourse—*emulate the beast and be a man.* Whoever heard of a horse swilling himself into insensibility? Swine swill, yes, but it is the nature of swine to swill. Whoever heard of a dog glutting its belly beyond capacity? Swine glut, yes, but it is the nature of swine to glut. Is it man's nature? Whoever heard of an ape, an ass, a cow, a cat, or a hyena attempting to hasten demise by way of unnatural processes? Has a hyena ever been known to suicide? Has a nigger?

Say what you will, dog, horse and hyena are morally cleaner, physically wiser than we lords of life. Lords of life, heh! Belly-worshippers. And by our bellies ended. What does the average intelligent Caucasian do when he gets a holiday? Stuff himself with carrion; batten upon carcass, entrails, substance of dead animal and vegetable matter. See him gulp an oyster whole, dissect a turkey, gnaw flesh from the rib of a heifer, nibble the leg of a frog, swallow the *huevos* of a bull, dispatch tongue and tail of an ox, bolt brains and liver of a calf—*et cetera ad nauseam.* Who was it tasted the first snail? Holiday come, drown ills in wine, and make unto yourself ills manifold. Behold your Lord of Life purchase and put down a quart of fusel oil, properly disguised and doctored. Observe the spectacle. A charming one. He's having a good time. "This is the life," he will tell you....Ask him tomorrow.

Eat, drink and be merry; for tomorrow ye shall die. Isaiah, you should have been ashamed of yourself. Naughty Isaiah! You and old Omar and your kind have wreaked curious havoc with your innocent mouthings. Ban the bible and the Persians if this is the best they have to offer. Cicero sees it otherwise: *Tantum sibi et potionis adhibendum est, ut reficiantur vires, non opprimantur.* I'm hanged if I'll English it. An interlinear "De Senectute," II, 36, will give up the gloss.

"O tempora, O mores!" The cry went up seven decades B. C. It held seven centuries A. D. It held seven twelvemonths B. V. D., as my young friend coigns it, Before Volstead Done it. It holds today, seven twelve weeks

P. B. And it will hold hence into seven times seven infinities.

Ah, men!

JELLYBEAN

STORIED *Nouvelle Orleans,* city of caprice and originality, font of the quaint and the fantastic, has recently added to her much betufted turban another coveted feather. Though *Ma'mselle Nouvelle Orleans,* famous for her whims and piquancies, has got in the past many a gaudier plume, none, I believe, surpasses for sheer oddity this latest trophy. First to discover the highball (*ruffignac*), namer and concocter of the now almost legendary cocktail, the much "brewted" gin fizz, the inimitable sazerac, and various and sun dry liqueurs and potations (alas for yesterday): mistress of cuisine; mother of the "blues," the shimmy-sha-wobble, and jazz; first also to dub her hard-boiled brethren hoodlums — *Ma'mselle Nouvelle Orleans* now comes forth, elects and names the jellybean. What means this strange appellation? What ever alert American humorists from 'Gene Field and George Ade to Ring Lardner and Johnny Weaver seem somehow totally unaware of this remarkable discovery, the honor of which, I am told, goes to a minion of the New Orleans press. Though hearkening back some several years, the exact date of its acception remains doubtful.

Jellybean, Americano for *genus gelibeanum,* neuter as you note, is derived from the adjective gelus, that is, soft, mucilaginous, and *beanum* or *beanus,* in the masculine declension, that is head, block, or, in this instance, bean. *Ergo,* soft-head, jellybean.

Genus gelibeanum, blood brother to the flapper, cousin germane to the vamp, despised butt of cop, hoodlum and soda jerker, is a distinct and interesting species of jejune America. He is perhaps best described in his mental and physical make-up, for his morals like his sex are but vaguely defined. Mentally we discover him a potential moron, the mind located somewhere in the vicinity of belt and breeches. Physically his dimensions vary between that of the robustious gum-drop (who, by the by, is fast obscuring the flapper in these parts) and the anaemic counter-jumper.

His natural habitat is the entrance to the soft drink emporium or corner drug store, Main Street, America. There he is to be found in flocks, coveys or pairs as the exigency warrants, peering, grinning, or staring vacuously at the passers in and out, trying his very deucedest to look the man-about-town. A devilish wicked fellow he would be thought, a rake with the skirted of the species. His secret ambition one glimpses in his ridiculous attempt at the ancient art of ogling.

However, my friend, the jellybean is not in any sense a naughty boy. He is at once mild, harmless and questive, exhibiting a *naiveté* that in these "sophisticated days" is astounding. One wonders from what stock he stems. Of course, being a prohibition, post-war product, his age seldom exceeding nineteen summers, much in him may be condoned. His viriler elder brother, long since convalesced from the "late unpleasantness" will have none of him. He begets naught but contempt from his subtler, maturer sister. He is never known to have puffed a stogie. His favorite beverage is chocolate ice cream

soda with a dash of peppermint essence for kick. His heroes are Wallace Reid and the village ladies' man. His pseudo-Kuppenheimer hand-me-downs seem never quite to fit him about neck and buttocks. He neatly pins his *chapeau de feutre* to prevent mussing a carefully bandolined mop. His breeches are invariably abbreviated above and below, accentuating hinder parts, which, owing to this congestion, take on a decidedly plus aspect. Mauve or pea-green knitted tie, *crepe-de-chine* shirt, frat pin, and tannish brogues complete his sartorial fixtures. He is a puppy, a petter, a percy-boy, and a popinjay all in one—and he isn't. He is something more. He is a jellybean.

But don't waste your pity on him. Nature has been very good to him. He neither needs nor does he look for pity. He possesses that "certain something" which renders him more or less immune to hostile criticism. He is tender, bold, distrait, cute, callow and self-sufficient. I find myself waxing effusive. The subject is indeed absorbing. It cannot be treated meagerly. It needs air and space and time.

But if this fillip has whetted your appetite and you must have more of the stuff I beg to refer you to three forthcoming volumes on the subject which I have had the rare privilege of reading in proof. The first, "The Jellybean: His Meaning and Menace," by Beatricks Freudfax, author of "Advice to the Gumdrop," though delectable in spots, leaves me quite cold. The second, "The Evolution of the Bean," by Doctor Frank Cocci, you will find infinitely more satisfactory. The third, "Why Am I?" by Clarence Creme de Cocoa, an excellent bit of psychoanalysis, positively delights me. Clarence admits in his preface that he belongs to that steadily increasing class of young humanity now known to you as *genus gelibeanum*. His connotations on the text of Dr. Cocci's tome, which it appears he too read in manuscript, are remarkable in their penetration. Besides a charming appendix devoted to a resumé of his reasons for existence, the young author has compiled an excellent glossary of jellybeanisms. The whole book is intriguing. A superb work! And, mind you, these gifted writers are all local *literati*. Another feather in our cap!

Ah, *Ma'mselle Nouvelle Orleans*, your fame is now assured. Though conquistador, pirate, buccaneer, gentleman duelist, beautiful quadroon, *ruffignac*, gin fizz and cocktail have seen their day and vanished, the jellybean is still yours and bids fair so to remain, a growing monument to your perspicacity, Hermaprodite-like, defying oblivion.

Oscar, the curtain!

THE SHORT STORY

THE *rara avis* in the realm of letters is beyond doubt the short story. Despite the double fact that every fresh water college in America offers a "short story course" to the student aspirant and that the great commercial weeklies and monthlies literally get down on their knees and beg for them, tendering bribes almost tempting enough to lure a corporation lawyer away from his portfolios, the good short story remains unwritten.

One popular weekly, we are told, pays a minimum of five cents the word for a short story. In a case where the writer has attained a vogue, the com-

pensation is at ten cents the word, and sometimes more. When we consider that the modern story varies in length from thirty-five hundred to twelve thousand words this "compensation" is not entirely to be despised. Poor Poe, now living would reap a nice harvest with his average tale of ten thousand little etymons. Ten or twenty dollars per was the best he received. Suppose today some fortunate bibliophile should run across, in his browsing, an undiscovered MS of the Rev. Whipple's famous protegé, what sum think you, would it command in the MSS mart?

Henry James' "The Liar," a masterpiece in the art, contains no less than twenty thousand words; Kipling's "The Man Who Would Be King," over thirteen thousand; Hawthorne's "Gentle Boy" twelve thousand; Stevenson's "Will o' the Mill" eleven thousand five hundred, and so on down the line. But be warned, young Tyro, the big magazines will have none of this today. Save an occasional "Novelette, complete in this issue," five or six thousand words is maximum.

And yet, and yet—though all over these great United States, in almost every by-street of almost every hamlet, there lurk horn-rim spectacled lads and slightly aging spinster ladies, infected with the virus, *cacoethes scribendi,* we are producing nothing noteworthy in this field.

Poets and critics there are a-plenty. Pianists, painters, prophets and politicians abound. Barbers, baseball players and bank presidents are, as ever, in sufficient numbers. Where are our raconteurs?

During the last six months of arduous (?) labor, the Editors of this "jaunty little journal" have received an average of no less than two short stories per diem. Notwithstanding our newness and isolation they pour in upon us from all parts of *terra America*—Seattle, Bangor, Cheyenne, Matteawan, Biloxi, Pensacola, Kansas City, Baton Rouge, Cincinnati, Bogalusa, Chicago and Manhattan—for the most part neatly typed, forty-five hundred to six thousand word *Contes pathetiques* submitted by John and Mary (better Lionel and Ethelyn) This and That, "at usual rates, serial rights only." Out of this thesauric mine of material, upwards of three hundred "valiant verbosities," what have we found? One rather dreary oriental affair by a well-known writer who "gets his price" so he informs us, but as a concession to our enterprise proffers his ware to *us* at the ridiculously low rate of five hunddred American eagles; one idealistic bit of fantasy by a young woman who has done some nice work, but in this instance must have been suffering from a slight attack of *cerebralitis;* and one little forty-five hundred word first attempt (a good one at that) which we printed in our last issue.

Please, gentle contributors, leave off for a fortnight your making of pretty lyrics, facile *feuilletons,* satirical essays, pungent paragraphs and sophisticated abstractions in the "modern" manner. Surprise us the next time, if you will, with a good, tingling yarn.

WANTED: A HOTSPUR

"SUCCESS consists in a close appliance to the laws of the world and since these laws are intellectual and moral, an intellectual and moral obedi-

ence." "The secret of success lies in the same old word, drudgery." "Every success in life comes from sympathy and co-operation and love." "Success in life is a matter not so much of talent and opportunity as of concentration and perseverance." And so on, and so on—balderdash for the most part.

I prefer to believe with Disraeli that "Success is the child of audacity." All of the high flown, honeyed phrasings of our Emersons, our Sammy Smileses, our Henry Ward Beechers, our Dr. Frank Cranes, come to naught weighed against the simplicity of this statement. Here is the recipe, my friend: Dare, and you will succeed.

But how few of us dare dare. Timorous souls, cabined by cowardice, we trudge on in a rut, dug with our own hands, mud behind, beneath, before,, mud ourselves. Dull, deaf, purblind, senseless to the reaches above, we plod along. One sniff for your Hotspur is enough. Give him one whiff of high adventure and we may wallow in mud to our heart's content.

The wail goes up of lack of opportunity, heritage, luck. This cry obtains for cattle alone. Hotspur wants not for opportunities, he makes them. A hackneyed reminder, but one that cannot be overstated. Your man of vision and courage knows but one master, his own instinct. When Napoleon felt the need of a war to exercise and demonstrate his genius he did not sit down and wait for the war to happen, he went out and made one.

Homo minimus digs his hole and lies in it. Visionary Hotspur builds his castles only to topple them over. The gulf between *homo minimus* and Hotspur lies in the fact that the first burrows a comfortable hiding place, where to sneak safe from a world he dare not glimpse nor grasp, whereas the second fashions a world to his own liking, tarries there a space, tears it down, rebuilds again, destroys, rebuilds, moving always up and up until gloriously discontent, reaching, grasping, reaching, he wins at length to a world beyond worlds, which is not of this world.

Not ever in our planet's history have the Hotspurs of humanity been more needed than at the present. This is indeed an hour of ponderous marionettes, mechanical dunces. Charlatanism, chicanery, Teratology, anything is preferable to the tiresome mediocrity of the moment.

"God give us men"—you know the verses of old Holland—men who dream, men who dare, the difficult, the preposterous, the audacious. Carlyle with his stock Scotch intellect takes it all too seriously. Your Hotspur, your successful man is not so much a child of God or fortune as he is a child of perversity or daring. The mountebank and the demi-god are synonymous, as are the genius and the madman. A certain technique, conscious, curious, unabashed, incredible to the run of humanity, is the trick. There are, I venture, still among us a few, who by canny observation and singular cunning coupled with sheer nerve, will contrive this trick in the ultimate. I submit that these neoterics be somehow or other corralled, examined and encouraged in the furtherance of their fantastic whims. That, say, a course in *Espiéglerie* be introduced into the curriculum of our larger universities where they will be coached, by whom, heaven only knows, in the slippery art and technique of mundane

success. We must have men—quaint, absurd, egoistic men—men of the ancient character—droll, moon-struck, eccentric chaps. It matters not how we get them, men of audacity, daring, preposterous men.

Things, indeed, have come to a lamentable pass. Take inventory, whom have or had we, during the last stirring years!—one Theodore Roosevelt, the "late" D'Annunzio, Nicolai Lenine and Charles Chaplin. It is pitiable, my friends, is it not? What has become of the hardy, high hearted breed of yesterday? Have we no potential Hectors in our midst? Is the old blood turned to water? Is man becoming no more than an efficient automaton, or is our man of tomorrow to be a woman? Wanted: a Hotspur!

MR. HERGESHEIMER'S HENS

BE it confessed at start I am no Hergesheimer fan. Four only of his opuses have come before my critical eye, to-wit: "The Three Black Pennys," "Linda Condon," "San Cristobal de la Habana," and, very lately, "Cytherea." What lies between the covers of "The Lay Anthony," "Mountain Blood" and "Java Head," etc., I don't know nor do I seem to care. Odd, too, for despite the fact that the Pennys, Linda and Cytherea aroused my interest enough to stick with them to the finish, I am not at all curious nor do I seem to care what manner of persons or mechanics the other books contain.

Truth told, Joseph Hergesheimer remains an unsatisfactory writer on many counts. He doesn't seem to be able to hold his reader. Interest flags. Situations seem trivial. Little things are over stressed. Big things minified. Banalities abound. And always his male is pitiful. A fathead, a dub, a dunce. Observe Lee Randon in "Cytherea"—a flabbier specimen even than Norris's Philip Baldwin in "Brass," who, by every token, is the damndest duffer I have yet encountered in recent fiction. Still, Mr. Hergesheimer doesn't seem to intend this Randon to be a duffer. I hazard that to him Randon personifies the strong, vital he-man.

The first half of "Cytherea" is lamentably cheap and tedious. Were you not aware that Mr. Hergesheimer is an artist in words and that this "Cytherea" had been bruited by many critics as perhaps his admirablest conception, you might have tossed the book aside in disgust. But you hang on. And, by Venus, you are rewarded. Enter Savina, Mrs. William Loyd Grove! *Suum cuique*—Hergesheimer is indubitably a limner of women! Where Cabell paints his cock in gaudy front and feather, Hergesheimer limns his hen in all her native subtlety and savage naivete!

Yes, Mr. Hergesheimer is unquesttionably the artist when he depicts woman. Not Thomas Hardy, nor Dreiser, nor Willa Cather, not D. H. Lawrence, nor W. L. George give us woman humaner, vitaler, realer, nakeder than he. His women breathe, move, feel, cry, laugh, love, live, about you and all over the page. Savina and Linda are your women as well as his and their lovers'. You sense them. You lie with them, dream with them, plan with them. Odd isn't it that a writer who has this uncatchable knack of knowing woman should attempt anything else and in the attempt, of course, fail miserably?

Why doesn't Mr. Hergesheimer cull

from eld the Helens, Cleopatras and Sapphos of history and depict them with his inimitable delicacy and grace to the edification and enlightenment of mere man? And the DuBarry, Pompadour sisterhood? What we glimpse of them is only through the musty kaleidoscopia of quasi-historic hacks.

Savina Grove stands a vital character, a fine, live, passionate woman. The same might be said of the Penny women and Linda. Mr. Hergesheimer stalks and seizes the sex as none other among his contemporaries here or abroad. With all his limitations, his iterations, his confounded little mannerisms, when he paints woman, like Leonardo his Lisa, he shows you her soul, as well as her body—and more.

To Cabell, his cocks; to Hergesheimer, his hens.

JAUNDICE AND THE JU-JUBE

IF one should ask me what I consider the vitalest humor bequeathed to *genus homo,* instanter, I should respond (were I given to persiflage) ill humor. But and because, one hasn't asked or may not ever ask, being, as I have been told, a pugnacious party not entirely displeased with his slant on things, I indite—bile. Bile, sometimes mistermed spleen, great, torvous, God-given bile! —to thee are indebted all of the do--fellows, the go-boys of the world.

It was thou who informed Archimedes, Cicero, Plato, Cato, Galileo, Erasmus, Pascal, Charlemagne, Descartes and Machiavelli. It was thou who put the punch in Elizabeth, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Ben Disraeli. It was thou who pushed the pen of Homer, Dante, Milton, Cervantes, Dean Swift, the Jo(h)nsons, Ben and Sam, A. Pope, and T. Carlyle. It was thou who wielded the mallet and chisel of Praxiteles and Phidias; the brush of Leonardo and Michelangelo; the burin of Blake and Hogarth; the sceptre of the Caesars. It was thou who embroidered the buckram of de Pompadour and Brummel. It is thou who make Popes, politicians, soldiers, statesmen, fops and financiers. It is thou who gird the athlete, preen the mummer, sting the poet, fire the lover, gut the god. It is thou, by Zeus! who spin the very thread of life. Great bile!

This rhapsodical, or should I say? Boeotian period, though perhaps in your mind the jargon of a jackass, is not without meat to those who prefer their steak rather raw than well-done. Seriously, for, by course, the subject has a serious turn, my emotions attained this unnecessarily shrill pitch because of the increasingly distressing quantity of Polyanna propaganda that is being imposed upon a gullible public. Everywhere one goes one is confronted by the gargoyle of the grin-gospel. The daily papers, periodicals, street signs, shop windows, business offices, shine parlors, cigar stores, private homes — no place seems immune. Just yesterday while purchasing my daily dose of nicotine, my eye was brought down and my spleen up by this inspiring maxim; couched in wide red letters under the glass of the show case: "SMILE, IT'S WORTH A MILLION DOLLARS AND IT DOESN'T COST A CENT." Did I smile, ask me?

Well, what's the trouble with us? What's the old world coming to? Where is our gall; where are our guts, our livers? Take Bunyan's tip: give over the grin for a day. Scowl at your man

and see him cringe. Do you want something? Go out and get it. But don't go out and grin to get it. Go out, scowl, and demand it. If you don't get what you went for it isn't because you neglected to smirk at your man, it's simply because you lack bile. Junk Edgar A. Guest, Gene Stratton-Porter, and the saccharine sisters. Take yourself over to the second-hand book dealer's and purloin a copy of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" by way of antidote. Sounds like sales stuff from old man Schopenhauer.

Hell, fellow, this smile stuff's the bunk! Scowl at 'em, growl at 'em! Things have got to a sorry pass, when I am informed by no less an authority than Mr. Carter himself, that his famous liver pills are, at present, in as much demand as post-bellum pfennigs among Wall Street tippybobs. But the upshot of it is that bile, great, torvous god-given bile, seems gradually to have oozed out of us until most of us are becoming mere spineless, spleenless, smirking witlings. Laugh, guffaw, hoot, howl, bellow, pule, shout, shriek, grunt, but for the love of Mike and Minnie leave off grinning!

CLASSIC EMOTIONS

HOW few of us look with a naive eye upon time-accepted works of art. Gelded mentally and spiritually by parson, parent and pedant long before we are out of knee-breeches, we appraise mule-like with the drove.

In early youth, the most impressionable period of our lives, we are helplessly victimized by professorial counsel and parental benevolence. We are *told* everything. Our opinion formed, our ideas arranged, our very dreams expurgated by the guiding hand of parent and professor. All things we are taught from the lips of senility. This is right and that is wrong. This work good and that bad. We are told that Raphael was the greatest painter, the Sistine Madonna his masterpiece; that Tennyson was a poet and his *Idylls of the King* "wonderful"; that Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a "magnificent" opus; that a perfunctory appreciation of this book and that play, this picture and that opera, stamps you at once as a person of refinement and culture.

I have done the galleries of Europe, as, peradventure, have you. I have also done to a finish the stage, operatic and otherwise. I have done, further, my father's and many another's libraries. Several times in early childhood I have read myself ill abed, but not until, perhaps, yesterday have I "done" anything with a naive eye. The trick is this if you care to learn: forget all you have been taught and told, all books, all philosophies, all opinions, then strip naked (mentally, of course) and burn or freeze willynilly.

After reading Walter Pater's essay on Leonardo da Vinci I could hardly wait to get my first look at Dame Lisa. On entering the Louvre I fairly rushed to the picture. Jehovah, what a disappointment! Something must be wrong,

something must be lacking in me. Too young perhaps to appreciate its subtlety and beauty. My indifference was amazing. This was eight years ago. I have since learned and unlearned much, but this in particular, that one's individual reaction to a thing is all that argues. What do I care if Dickens is counted a great writer? He bores me. I prefer Balzac. The Venus de Milo is supposed to fire one with an appreciation of classic beauty. My impression was the same as it might have been had I gazed upon the nude effigy of my wife's laundress. Madame Tettrazini's vocal acrobatics fail to evoke in me the customary thrill. I incline towards John McCormack. Chesterton and Wells to me, at least, are tedious. Why hide the fact that Ring Lardner intrigues me more than E. V. Lucas?

If you, my friend, prefer Harrison Fisher's ladies to those of Aubrey Beardsley; Gene Stratton Porter's novels to Edith Wharton's; Bud Scott's Jazz Orchestra to the Boston Symphony, why, simply say so.

Let us try, if we can, to put away attitudes, silly affectations. They belong to our mid-Victorian progenitors. Pretense and superficiality are, or should be, out of place today. The hour of the honest clod is at hand, he of the naive eye.

MODERNISMS

ABOUT every several decades down the centuries ambitious youngsters have departed from the traditions of their sedater seniors to the championing of new ideas, cults, movements. About every several decades so-called new schools and dictums are foisted upon long-suffering humanity.

Turning back to the Eighteen nineties in art and letters one detects this spirit in perhaps its intensest manifestation. Victorianism was grown tedious. Something had to be done to dispel monotony. Readers of books and dilettanti yawned out of sheer ennui or went back to the Elizabethans and Restorationists for meaty victuals. Young men, taking notice, scratched heads and thought, or tried to think. It was time to start something new, to break away. Coteries were formed, magazines launched—*The Yellow Book, The Savoy, The Hobby Horse.* The Rhymers' and various other special clubs came into being. Wilde in his lily bed took down Beauty from her shelf, polished her off, dressed her to his liking and exhibited the result to a gaping audience. Beardsley with facile pencil perverted her image to his phthisic fancies. Henley declaimed her to his taste from the clinics of hospitals; Dowson, Thompson and Symons from brothel, gutter and dance-hall. Dame Beauty was become "modernized," made new to the particular conceit of each of her particular renovators.

So it was, so it is, so will it ever be. About every several decades Beauty is dragged off the shelf and refurbished for the edification of humanity and the comprehension of the selecter six. But

for the most part she is mutilated beyond recognition. And always you are aware that Keats must have been wrong when he synonymized her with Truth. For where Truth is nowadays, Beauty isn't, and where Beauty is, *Veritas non est.* Innumerable cohorts of Ists and Isms have routed her back to her sanctuaries in ancient Greece, Rome, Athens, legendary France and doughty England of the old days.

What I am trying to point is that newness remains quite negligible. Beauty as ever is all that counts, or Truth, as you please. The modern Isms of today become the antiquations of tomorrow. Several decades hence such writers as James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and our Waldo Frank will have been either entirely forgotten or recalled only as eccentric clowns who cavorted before a one-ring audience of other such eccentric clowns.

Read or try to read "Rahab," Waldo Frank's latest, and see what I mean. Here is tall fustian—pompous, tiresome, banal. Fustion shorn even of cleverness. The whole book seems a pitiful attempt to be smart, different. Why try always to be different? This is the weakness of present-day modern Isms. Why not try to write as one talks or as one is? My friend, the distinguished fictioneer-moralist, a militant modern, gives out that the first law in life as well as in letters is to accept one's self. I quite agree with him. Accept yourself, discover yourself, your true individuality, your true metier and then paint, orate, sell or manufacture linens, linoleums, mattresses or novels as you prefer.

At random I take another book "The Beautiful and Damned" by Scott Fitzgerald, the "flapper-philosopher," cried perpetrator of "This Side of Paradise." I plough dutifully through the first one hundred and fifty, getting tireder and boreder as the ploughing progresses. Here is the inevitable flapper (the devil take her) and her consort the male nonenity (of whom the devil will have none). Here is marriage, money and morons to your appetite's satiety. Here is gloom unconfined, dressed in "modern" lingo by "modern" dummies, done as we are told by a "modern" young man lately come up from Rutgers or some such institution.

And did you read "If Winter Comes?" And did you read "Dada's Darling"? And did youl read this? or that? by this or that protagonist of the new gospel. Speaking of Dada, not to be disrespectful to the infant, one yet wonders why the brat was weaned again. However Dadaism is not without significance. At any rate we have here a naive effort to get down to root, which, however ridiculous the means, is effort in the right direction.

But the difficulty with the whole outfit, pack and parcel, seems to be a woeful lack of the sense of values. Values are eternal. Truth is truth. Art is art. And so on. Of what avail is it that I

strip naked, paint belly blue, wear a ring in my nose, go out into the streets and dance a Hottentot shimmy to prove that I am not of the common herd when at heart I know I am? Why the spectacle? Does it impress anyone? Does it get me anywhere? Does it make me happier? If so well and good; if not, well?

Values are eternal. The old reminder. New gospels, new schools, new movements come and go. Every several decades the boys break away, start something different, but values — beauty, truth, humor, craftmanship— remain. And there is mirth on Olympus.

SHELLEY

THOUGH centennials per se seem to me just a bit absurd, they do have a saving quality as reminders of the persons and product of the commemorees. Especially so is this true in the case of Shelley, indubitably the most discussed, extolled and abjured literary personality of modern times. Shelley biographies, critiques, analyses, variorums, and intimate studies glut the market. From Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Medwin and Trelawney, down to Dowden, Buxton Forman, and Clutton-Brock and down, in another sense, to Paul Elmer More and Professor Babbitt, the Shelley legend has engaged the fancies of perhaps more diversely ecstatic and inquisitive minds than any other personal literary legend.

With Edmund Spencer he has been called poet's poet and certainly his following among the minnesingers during the century since his death has exceeded that of Byron, Keaths, Wordsworth and Browning bunched together. The only decent piece of prose that Robert Browning manufactured is his Shelley essay; Francis Thompson's finest production, surpassing in my mind "The Hound of Heaven" and "Sister Songs," is his grand eulogium of Shelley; Swinburne, Rosetti, and James Thomson of "Dreadful Night" fame, knelt at his shrine.

The year that marks the centenary of his death finds him as much if not more alive than the year that preceded his untimely demise. Glancing through back numbers of the soberer periodicals— monthlies, weeklies, dailies—over the past several months, one's eye is invariably fixt by a Shelley caption. This or that young college professor or critic, seduced by the legend and sensing the market value of the "occasional," goes to it with a vengeance. But as invariably as one's eye, that is the eye of the Shelley hound, is fixt by the caption so invariably is he ennuyéed by the content. What more can be said of Shelley? What more might be said of Shelley? Too much already has been exhumed. God save his ghost, there is no more I can add.

John Doe and the Ghost of Solomon

All things are vanity, Solomon saith.
What, sire, of love, and laughter, and death,
And what of faith?
Vanity presumes a sort of a gesture,
A mode or a mask or a dubious vesture,
While these four things are as definitely real
As a tooth-ache is or an automobile
Or a good stout meal;
As real, by the count, as anything can
Be in the droll experience of man.
He is a knave and a braggart and a fool
Would have Doe believe by a preachment or a rule
That everything here which we see or seem
Is only a dream.
And he is a fool and a braggart and a knave
Would have Doe believe that a grave is but a grave
And love an old illusion and death only death
When the heart ceases beating and the body's out of breath.
What of that death when the heart beats on
And the body breathes and moves but the soul is gone,
King Solomon?
Is this a vanity of vanities, too,
A thing to drown in a bottle of brew?
And what of that love confounds all reason
Won't pass away for a day or a season,
Filches the wits and won't pass away
Not for a reason, a season, or a day—
What of that, say?
And what, say, too, of that grim laughter
Gurgles from the soul a long while after
It has died in the quick body's cell
And gone with all dead souls down to Hell?
What can be the matter with the daft old wraith
Sillily chuckling at the business of death—
Can it lack faith?
Vanity of vanities, Solomon saith.

Now hearken ye to Doe, King Solomon,
You and your disciples, every mother's son,
Prattling your platitudes as best you can
To the listening ear and the gaping mouth of man
And the eye that will scan
Screeds—screeds that are punched full of holes
By the pitchfork prongs of poor damned souls—
Hearken ye to Doe: (Ta ra ra boom de ay!)
He is the wise man knows how to play
And how to pray;
Who would be a happy man must have some faith
And feel in his heart there's a life after death.
Vanity of vanities, Solomon saith,
Gasping for breath.

Every pretty fellow in his own ego
From great King Solomon to wee John Doe.

Caprice

Presently, when I am very dead
And my lean body rotted quite away,
A whimsey ghost will come to you and say
The many things in life I might have said
Of this and this and that, alackaday!

The tender, daring things I could not say
What time my flesh and bones were habited,
This wanton sprite spun out upon your bed
Will whisper you, alas, alackaday
Presently, when I am very dead.

Dowson and the Catholic Note in the Nineties

"Whom the Gods love, Death does not cleave
nor smite,
But like an angel with soft trailing wing,
He gathers them upon the hush of night
With voice and beckoning."

MEAGRE and for the most part unsympathetic, have been the various critiques and accounts of Ernest Dowson, severally dubbed the Chopin of Poetry and the Burns of the Nineties.

Of the facts of his life we are told little. He was born at Kent, England, on August 2, 1867. His great-uncle was Alfred Domett, Browning's "Waring," and himself a poet. His father had a taste for literature and lived for some time in France and on the Riviera because of poor health, Ernest being rather irregularly educated in France and thereabouts until what time he entererd Queen's College, Oxford. Leaving this institution of learning in 1887 without taking a degree, he came to London and lived there intermittently several years, between visits to France, the country of his heart. The last years of his short life were spent almost entirely in Paris, Brittany and Normandy, though he died at a bricklayer's cottage in the village of Catford, England. His body was buried in the Catholic section of the Lewisham cemetery, on February 27, 1900. His delicate, wistful spirit still lives, for us, in his work.

Dowson was an early convert to the Catholic Church. But because of the inconsistency of certain of his actions with his ideals, has been accused by more than one writer of toying with his religion, or as being, rather intoxicated with its artistic side, drunk with incense, chrisms and candles.

Such, however, is the spleen of the iconoclast. It is not given every man to live up to his ideal. The best most of us can do is not to give over altogether to the ways of the world. Wordsworth's cry "The world is too much with us!" obtains in 1920 as it did in 1820 and in 1890. "Late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers". There was little of "getting and spending," however, in poor Dowson's life, but much indeed of a laying waste of powers. Therein lay his, as many another man's mischief.

That which has been generally conceded his most admirable lyric is the "Non Sum Qualis Eram Sub Bonae Regno Cynarae."

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips
and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath
was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my
fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm
heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep
she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth
were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was
gray:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my
fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara, gone with the
wind,

Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara, in my fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine:
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara in my fashion.

Here, as Arthur Symons has it: "He has for once said everything, and he has said it to an intoxicating and immortal music." This poem has a grace, rhythm and an individuality unsurpassed by the poetry of the period, yet scattered about Dowson's work are numerous lesser lyrics which judged by one's individual reaction towards them perhaps excel the better known piece. Witness this little gem:

EXTREME UNCTION

Upon the eyes, the lips, the feet,
On all the passages of sense,
The atoning oil is spread with sweet
Renewal of lost innocence.

The feet, that lately ran so fast
To meet desire, are soothly sealed;
The eyes that were so often cast
On vanity, are touched and healed.

From troublous sights and sounds set free;
In such a twilight hour of breath
Shall one retrace his life, or see
Through shadows, the true face of death?

Vials of mercy! Sacring oils.
I know not where nor when I come,
Nor through what wanderings and toils,
To crave of you Viaticum.

Yet, when the walls of flesh grow weak,
In such an hour, it well may be,
Through mist and darkness, light will break,
And each anointed sense will see.

Everard Meynell in his biography of Francis Thompson writes: "What English artist for fifty years has made a Madonna and Child? Aubrey Beardsley made one. What poet has sung of the last sacraments? Ernest Dowson's most beautiful verses are on the Extreme Unction." It might not be amiss to indicate here that Dowson was but one of a group of young artists who embraced Catholicism during the Eighteen-Nineties. Katherine Bregy, in the *Catholic World* states that: "Not at the height of the Oxford Movement was Rome more regnant of artistic and literary England than during these curious early Nineties." Indeed, the most prominent figures of the decade, Beardsley, Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Francis Thompson, Mrs. Meynell, Henry Harland, Simeon Solomon and Oscar Wilde, were, or became, Catholics. With the exception of Mrs. Meynell, all of these artists died comparatively young and for the most part as the result of a general taint in the atmosphere of the time. A certain dungy, over-ripe excrescence, as it were, pervading men and manners. Indeed, *"Fin de Siecle"*! Looking at it from the vantage point of today, pre-war fermentation.

It has been our pleasure to have made somewhat of a study of this unique and interesting period in English literature. We first became attracted towards its quaint bizarreries through the swift, suicidal temper of its genius. There was something psychologically strange about the deliberate way with which these young men rushed into the flames of a fire they had builded with their own hands. Even as star-desirous moths, wing-weary from seeking the

greater light, submit to the lure of the candle, so now did these, feeling themselves not strong enough to attain to the star of Beauty, accept in lieu the candle of her distorted sister, Artificiality.

Aubrey Beardsley perhaps illustrates this more than any other. To him had been given such genius and technique as to have called forth the opinion that he was the greatest black and white artist since Albrecht Durer. What wasted talents were his, he himself recognized on his death bed, renouncing all that bizarre, sensuous, cryptic work which had so brought him before the public eye. But, as Edmund Spenser remains the poet's poet, will Aubrey Beardsley remain the artist's artist. His technique is superb.

In this matter of technique, Dowson also excels, being by far the truest and most finished singer of his day. A singer, who, in very truth, has given a voice to silence. A lyric of his with its beautiful heading: "O Mors! Quam Amara Est Memoria Tua Homini Pacem Habenti In Substantiis Suis—

Exceeding sorrow
Consumeth my sad heart!
Because tomorrow
We must depart,
Now is exceeding sorrow
All my part!

Give over playing,
Cast thy viol away
Merely laying
Thine head my way:
Prithee, give over playing,
Grave or gay.

Be no word spoken;
Weep nothing; let a pale
Silence, unbroken
Silence prevail!
Prithee, be no word spoken,
Lest I fail!

Forget tomorrow!
Weep nothing; only lay
In silent sorrow
Thine head my way:
Let us forget tomorrow,
This one day!

A lyric like this, as Symons says: "Languid, half inarticulate, coming from the heart of a drowsy sorrow" could hardly have been produced at any other time than during this self-conscious, effete period.

Dowson was more Latin than French in his affinities. Notwithstanding numerous translations from the French in both verse and prose, his art is distinctly Latin, almost Horatian in its nicety. Observe the indefinable sense of quiet and wistfulness found in this poem:

NUNS OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION

Calm, sad, secure; behind high convent walls
These watch the sacred lamp, these watch and pray:
And it is one with them when evening falls,
And one with them the cold return of day.

These heed not time; their nights and days they make
Into a long, returning rosary,
Whereon their lives are threaded for Christ's sake;
Meekness and vigilance and chastity.

A vowed patrol, in silent companies,
Life-long they keep before the living Christ
In the dim church, their prayers and penances
Are fragrant incense to the Sacrificed.

Outside, the world is wild and passionate;
Man's weary laughter and his sick despair
Entreat at their impenetrable gate:
They heed no voices in their dream of prayer.

They saw the glory of the world displayed;
They saw the bitter of it, and the sweet;
They knew the roses of the world should fade,
And be trod under by the hurrying feet.

Therefore they rather put away desire,
And crossed their hands and came to sanctuary
And veiled their heads and put on coarse attire,
Because their comeliness was vanity.

And there they rest; they have serene insight
Of the illuminating dawn to be:
Mary's sweet star dispels for them the night,
The proper darkness of humanity.

Calm, sad, secure; with faces worn and mild:
Surely their choice of vigil is the best?
Yea! for our roses fade, the world is wild;
But there, beside the altar, there is rest.

In concluding, we glean from a little brochure long out of print, Blaikie-Murdoch's "Renaissance of the Nineties," the following paragraph: "In the matter of human interest, the *rosa rosarum* of all the nineties is the poet, Ernest Dowson. It is strange how little justice has been given to this singer. Encyclopedists heed him not, while the Athenaeum, writing of him during his lifetime, said he 'cribs from Swinburne,' declared that his poems 'are artificial, and there is from beginning to end no new idea,' and concluded: 'Mr. Dowson knows the language fairly well if only he had something to say.' This criticism is superficial and stupid, for in general tone Dowson is far from akin to Swinburne, and his likeness to him lies only in a taste on the younger poet's part for double rhymes, and for the use of a long line. And as to the poet having no new idea, that is a merit; for poetry, as Keats writes, 'should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.' Now that, exactly, is what Dowson's best poems do. They are always natural, being sometimes like laughter, more often like tears. And far from having nothing to say, the poet had everything to say; for he sang again and again the song of pure human feeling."

What more can be asked of a poet, but that his poems he "natural, sometimes like laughter, more often like tears?" Does not one turn to poetry, as one might to religion, in time of travail and sorrow, seeking therefrom that solace which is neither in work nor in play, and glimpsing therein the very visage of his soul?

"They are not long, the weeping and the[1] laughter,
Love and desire and hate;
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream."

Note—The lines which prelude this paper are taken from, at this writing, an uncollected poem of Dowson's "The Passing of Tennyson"; those which bring it to a close form the envoy to his first volume "Poems" and bear the heading: "Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam."

Albert Perkins

Pigwidgeons it is rumored aren't:
Dwerger and troll and loup-garou
Men depose are fabulous nonsense—
That is, Albert, men like you.

Will-o-the-wisp and djinn and banshee,
Flippertigibbet and nis and deev—
Certainly none of these nursery fictions
Men like you believe.

How is it then grave skeptical Albert
Perkins you have fallen thrall
To this quite absurd, well—lady who
Doesn't exist at all?

Gewgaw

Puppets we
Toys of a day
Marionettes for mockery
Tattered dolls a god at play
Fretful grown and dolefully tired
With the getting of all that he desired
Twists and tears and tosses away
Marionettes for mockery
Toys of a day
Puppets we

A Word on Francis Thompson

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
Time shall reap, but after the reaper
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper

THE man who wrote these lines, "sun-hazed sleeper" though he was, reckoned well in his prophecy. The world has gleaned of him more bountifully perhaps than he looked for, but his reckoning holds; and it is good to see that a man as oblivious as he to the moil of life about him was yet cognizant of his own contribution to the world. Francis Thompson was more than "sun-hazed sleeper", more than mystic, more than poet even, he was child. His is the philosophy of childhood, of innocence. His is the wisdom of the child.

In his essay on Shelley we hear him saying: "Know you what it is to be a child? It is to be something very different from the man of today. It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief; it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything, for each child has its fairy godmother in its own soul; it is to live in a nutshell and to count yourself the king of infinite space; it is

To see the world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour;

it is to know not as yet that you are under sentence of life, nor petition that it be commuted into death." Completing the period, he says, speaking of Shelley: "To the last in a degree uncommon even among poets, he retained the idiosyncracy of childhood, expanded and matured without differentiation. To the last he was the enchanted child."

The same might be said and more pertinently of Thompson: To the last he was the enchanted child. Drunk with dreams and the gorgeous symbols they evoked he lived in a world of his own imagining, that world of faery so precious to wide eyed childhood. "It is to believe in belief." He truly believed in belief, though surrounded on all sides by sceptics and iconoclasts. "It is to turn lowness into loftiness." In the gutters of London he fashioned the loftiest imagery poet has yet bequeathed to a bewildered world. With his fairy godmother in his soul, living in a nutshell or a sewer, what matter, counting himself king of the infinite, turning nothing into everything, he was the tired, soiled, yet illusioned child—gutter waif, if you will, bare feet in its dregs but eyes to the stars, head totty with heaven.

It is hard to speak of Francis Thompson without growing somewhat ecstatic, arguing of course one is in sympathy. His is the sort of magic that either takes you or misses you. His is the magic of a naiveté glittering with Cinderella resplendence. It is the hour of midnight

and the spangled horses have again become mice and the silver coach a pumpkin, but he does not see the mice and the pumpkin—the silver coach, the shining coachman, the spangled horses are still there. The absurd child won't have them away. There is no reality but this —the reality of dream, of faëry; the reality of unreality.

One might parry this by saying that Thompson is often sad and disappointed and aware. So he is, but with the sorrow, the disappointment, the awareness of a hurt child that is grieved, vexed, or cognizant of his hurt for the moment, and the moment only. The "Hound of Heaven" singularly illustrates the sanguineness of his nature. There must be something, some compensation for every hurt. The toys taken from the erring waif, tears come into his eyes and the mother arms are there to receive and console.

> All which I took from thee I did but take,
> Not for thy harms,
> But just that thou might's seek it in my arms.

All lost, there is yet the mother or father as final solace. The child has transgressed, has strayed away, his toys are gone, his clothes are torn and soiled, he is hungry and tired and heartsick, but there is refuge

> All which thy child's mistake
> Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
> Rise, clasp My hand, and come

We scoffers, we solemn little egos, we pompous windy squawking gesturers, we worldly tripe, is there not some shred of young wonder left in us that will respond to such a plea: "Rise, clasp My hand and come."

Surfeited with the empty babble and tricky innovations of fumbling contemporaries it is with a feeling of keen satisfaction that one reaches over for a volume of Thompson's showing on his shelf along with Villon, Campion, Crashaw, Blake, Heine, Shelley and Verlaine, a valiant choir, and sits back with a sigh of relief, knowing that he will find here at least some leaven for a jaded spirit.

Armament

Old kings and old warriors and monsters out of fable,
Fine gentlemen and troubadours repose upon my table.
Grey scholars and magicians and little wizened elves,
Plumed knights and famous demons rest on my shelves...
Small hurts and mean labors and hungers of a kind,
Stops and frets and trivial things clutter up my mind...
When I would dream as late I dreamed, when I would move again
In the company of troubadours and the grey mysterious men,
Or break a lance in the tournament, or borrow a courtier's leman,
Or drink with kings or sport with elves or hobnob with a demon.

Gaelic Boon

The hush of the stars
Of a windless night,
The hush of the air
In the early light,
The hush of the sleepers
Asleep in the wood,
And the hush of my woman
Is good, is good.

The moan of the cattle,
The banshee wail,
The keen in the song
Of the nightingale,
The sobbing of fiddles,
The cry of the blood,
And the croon of my woman
Is good, is good.

The crumple of ploughlands
Under the feet,
The fumes that arise
From the smoldering peat,
Waving wild grasses,
Ways that are rude,
And the way of my woman
Is good, is good.

The heat in my body,
The hurt in my breast,
Ask rhythm and rapture
And wishful unrest.

The Lorn Knight: A Ballad of Kept Faith

I am the lorn knight, gone a thousand years,
I stand along the forest's edge and stare into the meres
Searching for a dream that I lost in my dying,
Yet I am but a shadow and the sound of a sighing.

I am but the shadow of a lone tall pine
Thrown athwart a pool by the blanched moon's shine,
And I am but the sound of the sighing of its boughs
Which the temper of the winds and the wind's play rouse.

The dream that I lost was the vision of a glory
Got in my living from a venerable story,
The vision of a heaven and a haven and a peace
And a respite from the body in the soul's release;

A white high place where the king of all kings
Rewarded right knights for their venturings,
Bestowed upon a soul the gold of illusion
And made a brave ending to a soul's confusion.

What's a man to do at the hour of his death
But hold to a dream with his last quick breath?
Yet what's a man to do in the after of his dying
When he finds that his dream was a treacherous lying

What's a man to do but hold to his vision
In the throat of the void and the teeth of derision!—
Hold to his vision though it be a lost thing
Buried in the meres of remembering.

For the dream of a man is a gift and a glory
And more than the spinning of a venerable story.
And more than the notions of a sly priest's scheming
Is the lure and the need of a warrior's dreaming.

I am the lorn knight, dead a thousand years,
I stand beside the forest's edge and stare into the meres
Searching for a dream that I lost in my dying,
Yet I am but a shadow and the sound of a sighing.

Time is a neverness and doom is a sleeping
To the vigil for a dream of a proud ghost's keeping;
The sighing of the boughs and a lone tree's wraith
Are a challenge to the void and a warrior's faith.

Stored Against Ennui

This you cannot take away—
The record of an argent day
Remembered in the lethal haze
Of unrememberable days.
This you cannot take from me—
A silver shining memory.

This you cannot give again—
A fluid ecstasy of pain
Cooling the lavas of the brain
Like a sudden fall of rain.
This of all I found and kept
Dreamed and knew, and knowing, slept.

This I found and this I lost
And this I kept at any cost.

Variation on An Old Theme

His love which is not love at all
Her love beside—
What is it set against the glow
Of lowly pride?—

Her pride in him that sees in him
What Mary saw
In Christ her son, the son of God,
With wondering awe—

With awe that held the love she felt
A blameful thing,
A sin against her son and Lord
And God her king.

As Mary felt she feels, and sees
As Mary saw;
As Mary loved she loves, and holds
The man in awe.

And yet his love which is not love
Her love beside,
Is such that he would die for her
As Jesus died.

The First Son of My Mother

The first son of my mother,
And him I never knew,
Came last night to my troubled bed
As apparitions do.

The first son of my mother
Came last night
And stood beside me in silence
Radiantly white.

He said no word
And he stirred nowise,
But his face spoke a miracle
Through white clear eyes.

The first son of my mother
Who would have been thirty-three,
As years go Lord Jesus' age
On Calvary.

Standing there in silence
Radiantly white
And stirring not in anywise
Came last night.

The first son of my mother,
A miracle to see,
Stood beside my troubled bed
And smiled on me.

Six Cravens and a Seventh

Of what are you afraid?
I am afraid of the light
That dazzles and overpowers
And strikes me blind.

Of what are you afraid?
I am afraid of the darkness,
It glooms, it engulfs me,
It drives me mad.

Of what are you afraid?
I am afraid of the thunders
That crash and shatter
And confound my hearing.

Of what are you afraid?
I am afraid of Beauty,
She lures and fascinates
And leaves me mute.

Of what are you afraid?
I am afraid of the devils
That bait and hound
And trap my spirit.

Of what are you afraid?
I am afraid of God
And his terrible vengeance
On a sinful man.

And what fear you, friend?
Myself alone
Within whom there is all—
The light and the darkness,
The thunders, the devils,
Beauty and God.

Rebuke to the Certain

An acid gnaw is in the winds,
The welkin wears a sneer,
And the moon is like some bloodied eye
Drolly trying to peer
From behind a bandage of gauze
Cloud drifts smear.
The shudder hags are abroad tonight
And their green eyes leer.

The green eyes of the shudder hags
And the moon's blear eye,
The acid gnaw of the prowling winds,
The grimacing mouth of the sky
And the gauzy bandages of cloud
Utter a cool defy
To all the pleasant absurdities
You lads are living by.

Prudence

A crazy wind came whistling
  Through the chamber of his brain
And straightway he fastened its casements
  For fear he should go insane.

He pulled down the shades and locked the doors
  And shut out all the light,
And now he is as seeing a man
  As ever lost his sight.

The Swamp Spirit

What disenchanted spirit broods
Above these solitudes,
What wisp of what long perished soul
Making weird dole
In windless silences and silences more deep
Than sullen marshes keep
Over a demon's sleep?

This is no common wraith
Keeping no common faith
With common deities.
This is the ghost of all the mysteries
And all the high desires
And all the lights of all the foolish-fires
That flit about
The marshes and the willows in and out.
This is that spirit of the swamps
Free of the pomps
And blusterings of day.
This is that lonely stray
From a no-realm afar and away,
From a looming place
Beyond the reaches of measureless space,
From a shadowy remote demesne
No man has seen
Nor ever will.

This is the spirit of the still
Come to haunt the solitudes
Of the dark swamps and the dark woods
And the dark wastes of earth.
This is no ghost of common worth,
This is no meagre wraith
Keeping no meagre faith
With meagre deities.

This is the ghost of all the mysteries
And all the high desires
And all the lights of all the foolish-fires
That flit about
The marshes and the willows in and out.
This is the swamp's damp breath
Exuding death.

Though mortals fear it
This is no common spirit,
This is no ghost to fear
Brooding, keening, breathing here.
This is the swamp's breath,
Death . . . cool death.

Metaphysician

What special deity protects this knave
Against the lash of an ironic fate?
What stout bravadoes buoy him and bait
His proselytes? or what sly devil gave
Him the colossal arrogance to brave
Tall cheats, and temper to interrogate
The saws of all the prophetry who prate
Of sundry awful things beyond the grave?

Is it that having tired of ancient lies
He put an old delusion to the test,
And finding it a shoddy compromise
Educed the pack of them had only guessed;
And so, befooled, presumed to dramatize
Himself a god grown weary of the jest.

In the Tent Hence

He squats on his buttocks, a brummagem Buddha,
His eye to the purse of the paying intruder.
(An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.)
Gaze on me, gentles, and fathom Truth!

They look, at his bidding, they look again.
The future! ladies and gentlemen.
He stares—he stares—he stirs not a lash.
(NO CREDIT EXTENDED STRICTLY CASH).

An eye for an eye, gentlemen! ladies!
A tooth for a tooth and a turn in Hades.
Abracadabra! out with you! out!
(A devil to pay and donkeys to flout.)

Timothy Spied a Goblin

Timothy spied a goblin
    Peeping over the fence,
When I told mother
    She said, Nonsense.

But, Mother, it was a goblin,
    Timothy told me as much.
And Mother said, Why goblins!
    There are none such.

Just then a ghost of a wind
    Rustled the tapestries,
And Mother, turning as white as a sheet,
    Shouted, There it is!

Two in a Mad House

I.

I was ever a lover of rollicking girls,
For rollicking girls are kind,
But I happened upon a solemn wench
And she drove me out of my mind.

II

I hazarded all on a sporting man
And staked him for his play,
But he lost the loot and my love to boot,
And pilfered my wits away.

Souvenir

Looking into your eyes, my son,
I see
An image of a quaint little chap
That once was me.

Twenty-five years ago my own
Young eyes
Held just such a look of whimsey and
Surprise,

Held just such a red little devil in
Their limpid blue—
What wouldn't I give and give, my son,
To live in you!

What wouldn't I give and give and give,
Heigho!
To see with the eyes of twenty-
Five years ago.

Dubious Beneficence of the Great Winds

The little winds go scurrying,
The great winds behind,
They scamper through the silences
Of his dark mind.
The little winds are blind.

The great winds have terrible eyes
Peering through the gloom
That cloaks the somnolent silences
Him entomb.
The great winds spell a doom.

The little winds go whimpering
And scurrying about,
The great winds with their terrible eyes
Search them out,
Scatter them in a rout—

Scatter to rout the little winds,
The little winds that whined
And scampered through the silences
Of his vext mind.
The great winds are kind.

Listen!

Listen, old prophets and patriarchs, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Moses, grey serious solemn men, heavy with wisdoms and words, big with visions of unseen gods, proclaiming messiahs and judgments and laws with much blowings of the nose and catching of breath and wandering of the earth; listen, listen.

Listen, grave Dante, you the lover, the dreamer, the politician, maker of hells and heavens, in whatever hell or heaven you haunt whether of your own or of another's fancy. Listen, listen.

Listen, William Blake, seer of visions, madman, quaint singer of simple songs, wherever you may be, there or nowhere, listen, listen!

Listen you proud Goethe, man of the world, seducer of many wenches, God-fearing good citizen, Mephisto's father and super-sentimentalist, in what guilded hell or purple void you wander turn an ear.

Listen, Walt Whitman, fool, rascal, fanatic whatever you were or were not, whatever you are, whatever you have found or lost there or nowhere, listen.

Listen you Villon and Heinrich Heine and Robert Burns, Byron, Leopardi and Shelley, and King Alfred and Charlemagne, Napoleon and Woodrow Wilson, and all you struck dreamers, and imaginers and magicians in words and fools of the world whose names and whose doings and dreaming and writings we are not this moment able to forget, listen, listen!

And listen you nameless ones, baffled and broken by living, or careless or heedless or undriven by dreams, unwhipped, unurged, unknown wherever you are or are not, what limbo or chaos you inhabit, hear me? For I am that voice you strained for, sought for, strove to catch or missed unheeding. Listen, you bending here, listen, listen! I am that voice you seek, strain after; I am that voice whispering, whispering, flute like, incongruous

alien. I am that voice once heard and all is found and lost and over. I am that word you sought in life and did not find. I am that word you seek in death and have not found. I am the end, the end, the end, the end that has no ending that has no ending, no ending, no ending. Listen, listen the voice of life and no-life, death and no-death, soul and no-soul, sound and no-sound. Always I am; the end that has no ending; malaise, malaise, malaise!

Coda

Life,
A whimsical jest
At best.

Death,
Pardie,
The ultimate drollery.

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Reviews

TULIPS AND CHIMNEYS

(Tulips and Chimneys, by E. E. Cummings. Thomas Seltzer, 1923.)

MR. Cummings is almost the only poet now writing in America who possesses the quality of exuberance to an eminent degree. Most American poets sing only one song like the cuckoo or timidly expand in a scholarly way into new fields. Vachel Lindsay is prolific in one directon, rather than exuberant, and the same is true of Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, and Maxwell Bodenheim. Louis Untermeyer in conventional patterns and Miss Lowell in *vers libre* are generally merely facile, only occasionally striking a resonant chord. Ezra Pound is lately pedantic. But Mr. Cummings explodes in any direction. Sometimes good, sometimes wretched, his work has the rare quality like the letting off of steam which characterizes only very fine poetry and very bad poetry. Mr. Cummings with puzzling indifference produces a great deal of both, and prints the good and the bad with strict impartiality. This is distressing, but has been done by good men before him.

America has at present a number of good poets and a great many others who promise to be good. It is doubtful if any of them (arrived or en route) show the potentiality of great poetry with the possible exception of Mr. Cummings. He has both the exuberance of imagination and spirit and the instinctive sense of form which are required for the production of splendid verse. Some of the work he has done already is extremely fine.

Mr. Cummings' danger is too much experimentation in form as a thing in itself. Precise form is the distinguishing trait of each of the fine arts, for in expression they all merge. But literary form is of virtually no value without expression: because of a purely psychological difficulty abstract form cannot be rendered successfully in associative symbols like words. "Tender buttons" is obscured as a harmony when the juxtaposed words make an imaginative journalist visualize a "female suspender-button defending her young." Expression, in poetry, is similarly almost valueless without form. Bad form depreciates the most beautiful conceptions. They had much better be expressed baldly in unpretentious prose than garbled in wretched rhythms. Mr. Cummings has experimented with form at the cost of expression and occasionally with expression at the expense of form. Too much of this sort of thing will destroy his genius. If he will write simply and sincerely, he may be what we have been looking for. Luckily he is more interested in form than in his soul, knowing as all good artists know that his soul will take care of itself.

Mr. Cummings is distinguished for his rhythms and for startling idioms in diction. His diction is in the great tradition when it is best—subtle, and surprising, reflecting a feverish mental activity which guides him to a discovery of unsuspected attributes of ob-

jects. His diction is often strained out of all sense to obtain a desired rhythmical effect but, when restrained, is amazingly fine.

The following poem on Buffalo Bill is an example of one sort of verse that Mr. Cummings does delightfully:

Buffalo Bill's
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeons-
justlikethat
Jesus
he was a handsome man
and what I want
to know is
how do like your blueyed boy
Mister Death

The following lines chosen at random show other aspects of his technique. The first stanzas are from a very youthful, reminiscent and charming poem, "Epithalamium":

Wind beautifully who wanderest
over smooth pages of forgotten joy
proving the peaceful theorems of the
flowers
—did'st e'er depart upon more exquisite
quest?
and did thy fortunate fingers sometime
dwell
(within a greener shadow of secret
bowers)
among the curves of that delicious boy
whose serious grace one goddess loved
too well?
* * * *
And still the mad magnificent herald
Spring
assembles beauty from forgetfulness
with the wild trump of April: witchery
of sound and odour drives the wingless
thing
man forth into bright air, for now the
red
leaps in the maple's cheek, and suddenly
by shining hordes in sweet unserious
dress
ascends the golden crocus from the dead.
* * * *
Softer be they than slippered sleep
the lean lithe deer
the fleet flown deer
* * * *
His lips drink water
But his heart drinks wine

Spring comes
the lean and definite houses

are troubled. A sharp blue day
fills with peacefully leaping air
the minute mind of the world.
The lean and

definite houses are
troubled.
* * * *
In thy beauty is the dilemma of flutes
* * * *
* * * *
This is the passing of all shining things
* * * *
now droops the faun head

now the intimate flower dreams

of parted lips
dim upon the syrinx
* * * *
stinging
gold swarms
upon the spires
silver

chants the litanies the
great bells are ringing with rose
the lewd fat bells
and a tall

wind
is dragging
the
sea

with

dream

—S

There are most pleasing and interesting passages in "Puella Mea", and many others which cannot be quoted here for lack of space.

Much of Mr. Cummings' work looks like affectation. On examination most of it seems aesthetically sincere. And yet his fondness for lower-case letters amounts to a form of fetichism. The English first person singular is a capital I. It should not hurt Mr .Cummings to admit this, since he is writing our language.

JOHN MCCLURE.

THE PUPPET MASTER

(The Puppet Master, by Robert Nathan. McBride, 1923.)

THERE have been many masters who pulled the strings for marionettes; but few who bestowed life upon them. Hans Anderson makes dolls the mouthpieces of his most pungent reflections. But Mr. Nathan's picture of life "in parvo" has a fragrance and wisdom that place it in a class entirely by itself. Possessing all the enticing traits of the author's earlier book "Autumn," it excels it in more profound, though still whimsical philosophy. Nathan's quiet irony is tempered by the humor of genuine humanity. He has succeeded in endowing the performances of two little dolls with all the fiery comedy and satire of old and wise adults, and young, very young lovers. What wonder then if these minor performers seem more various in temperament, more salted with wit, than the principal characters in the book?

To briefly sketch the plot: Papa Jonas, the puppet master, has an assistant, Mrs. Holly. Mrs. Holly's daughter, Amy May, begs for Papa Jonas's best actor, the clown, Mr. Aristotle. Aristotle is to become the lifelong companion of her doll, Annabelle Lee. After the two dolls are joined by a peculiarly moving ceremony of Papa Jonas's own choosing, he observes a courtship between Amy May's mother, and the young poet of his shop, Christopher Lane. This too, he furthers; and when the happy couple with Amy May have departed, leaving him desolate, his philosophical nature simply and gently resigns itself:—"There are still a few things to do for Mr. Moses. He does not act so well as Mr. Aristotle. However one must make the best of what one has. Yes," he said slowly, "one must make the best of what one has.....I must stick to my strings."

The inimitable humor of "Autumn" which winks in corners at the reader, is especially subtle in the following conversation between Mr. Aristotle and Mr. Moses—with regard to the former's approaching marriage; "As for her having only one eye," Mr. Moses added; "that is nothing; an eye is the smallest thing. The question is, how does she use it? Did you see the way she looked at you? so tender and a little moist?"

"Well" said Mr. Aristotle, "now that you speak of it....but as a matter of fact, most of the time she was upside down." And again Papa Jonas, in preparing Mr. Aristotle for the wedding, says to him: "Is it possible that you believe yourself worthy of something better? Fie, Mr. Aristotle. It is difficult to understand the purposes of heaven; they often have an appearance of improvisation....All marriages are fruitful. May this one, too, be fruitful; of peace, of quiet joy." "It won't be" said Christopher.

Was there ever more tempered raillery The only part of the book that seems inartistic and forced is when Aristotle, notably a puppet, though an animated puppet, escapes from his bride and returns to the shop to argue with old friends. Had Amy May accidentally left him on a chair for instance!....But he cannot be both doll and superman.

Neither can a reviewer play the part

of critic to such a piece of deliciousness as "The Puppet Master." He can only eat it up; and if his manner of digesting it be with tears as well as laughter, what's the odds? Like the infant rabbit, Jane Demonstration, who "holds the truth" and eludes the cold china doll, the book is the only one of its kind.

Robert Nathan's peculiar form of art does not intrude; it wins you slowly, like the rare companionship offered by a child. Its conceptions arouse more and more curiosity. From what well of past and present wisdom does he drink, to express himself in work so limpid and gleaming, so free from the silt of present day realism?

LAURA BENET.

FLORA AND FAUNA

(Birds, Beast and Flowers, by D. H. Lawrence. Thomas Seltzer, 1923.)

THE poems in this volume are written in a sort of Whitmanesque unrhymed cadence. The tone is conversational; at times, oratorical. Mr. Lawrence's poetry is not infrequently prose:

> You tell me I am wrong.
> Who are you, who is anybody to tell me
> I am wrong?
> I am not wrong.
>
> In syracuse, rock left bare by the viciousness of Greek women,
> No doubt, you have forgotten the pomegranate trees in flower,
> Oh so red, and such a lot of them.

On the other hand, Mr. Lawrence's prose is not infrequently poetry. Moreover, the man is always tremendously in earnest; and this earnestness, which in a commonplace personality would be tedious, unendurable, is impressive, when the earnest one happens to be possessed of genius, as Mr. Lawrence undoubtedly is.

The present volume contains passages of poetry, and poems which move through their emotion, or idea.

Of "Pomegranate"—the first of the "Fruits" group—I like only the last lines:

> For my part, I prefer my heart to be broken
> It is so lovely, dawn-kaleidoscopic within the crack.

In the poem called "Peach," the peach-stone is

> Wrinkled with secrets
> And hard with the intention to keep them.

And the poet says, among other things (too many other things), of the Fig that it is

> Folded upon itself, enclosed like any Mohammedan woman,
> Its nakedness all within-walls, its flowering forever unseen,
> One small way of access only, and this closed-curtained from the light..

and of Medlars and Sorb-Apples that they have

> Something of the same flavor as Syracusan muscat wine
> Or vulgar Marsala.
>
> Though even the word Marsala will smack of preciosity
> Soon in the pussy-foot West.

Grapes, impassioned Prohibition protest and plea for the "instincts" as against the "higher centers," is a characteristic expression of the Lawrentian philosophy, and beautiful as poetry. It is too long to quote entire:

> Look how black, how blue-black, how gloved in Ethiopian darkness
> Drooping among its leaves, hangs the dark grape!
> See him there, the swart, so palpably invisible!

Whom shall we ask about him?
The negro might know a little.
When the vine was rose, Gods were dark-skinned.
Bacchus is a dream's dream.
Once God was all negroid, as now he is fair.
But it is so long ago, the ancient Bushman has forgotten more utterly than we, who have never known.

Yet we are on the brink of re-remembrance.
Which, I suppose, is why America has gone dry.
Our pale day is sinking into twilight,
And if we sip the wine, we find dreams coming upon us
Out of the imminent night.
Nay, we find ourselves crossing the fern-scented frontiers
Of the world before the floods, where man was dark and evasive
And the tiny vine-flower rose of all roses, perfumed,
And all in naked communion communicating as now our clothed vision can never communicate....

Soberness, sobriety.
It is like the agonised perverseness of a child heavy with sleep ...

Dusky are the avenues of wine
And we must cross the frontiers, though we will not
Of the lost, fern-scented world:
Take the fern-seed on our lips
Close the eyes, and go
Down the tendrilled avenues of wine and the other-world.

More vigorous and less "poetic" is "The Revolutionary"—Mr. Lawrence versus the "behaviourists:"

Pale-face authority
Caryatids
Pillars of white-bronze standing rigid, lest the skies fall....
Oh, and I wish the high and super-gothic heavens would come down now,
The heavens above, that we yearn to and aspire to.

I do not yearn, nor aspire, for I am a blind Samson.
And what is daylight to me that I should look skyward?

Only I grope among you, pale-faces, caryatids, as among a forest of pillows that hold up the dome of high ideal heaven
Which is my prison,
And all these human pillars of loftiness, going stiff, metallic-stunned with the weight of their responsibility
I stumble against them.
Stumbing blocks, painful ones.

And from the same poem:

To me, all faces are dark
All lips are dusky and valved.

Save your lips, oh pale-faces!
Which are slips of metal
Slips in an automatic-machine, you columns of give-and-take....

See if I don't move under a dark and nude, vast heaven
When your world is in ruins, under your fallen skies.
Caryatids, pale-faces
See if I am not Lord of the dark and moving hosts
Before I die.

Certainly Mr. Lawrence is doing his bit.

"The Evening Land," a poem on America, and "Peace" are not memorable. Nor do I care for the Tree and Flower poems, though there are admirable passages among them. This, for instance, from "Cypresses:"

Evil, what is evil?
There is only one evil, to deny life
As Rome denied Etruria
And mechanical America Montezuma still.

and this from "Hibiscus and Salvia Flowers:"

Eve, in her happy moments
Put hibiscus in her hair
Before she took to knowledge, before she spoiled it all by knowing better.

"The Evangelistic Beasts" labor under a load of symbolism, and are often dull, and occasionally trivial, as in this, from "St. John:"

Put salt on his tail
The sly bird of John.

Is is in the "Creatures," "Reptiles," "Birds" and "Animals" groups that Mr. Lawrence is at his very best. "Man

and Bat" and "Snake" are vivid and significant dramas. "The Ass"—

> Poor ass, like man, always in rut,
> The pair of them alike in that.
>
> All his soul in his gallant member
> And his head gone heavy with the knowledge of desire
> and humiliation;

the "He-Goat"—

> ....his black nose snubbed back, pressed over like a whale's blow-holes,
> As if his nostrils were going to curve back to the root of his tail;

the "She-Goat"—

> ....perched on her manger, looking over the boards into the day
> Like a belle at her window;

the "Kangaroo,"—with..her little loose hands, and drooping Victorian shoulders; and "Bibbles" (little black dog in New Mexico with a "blackberry face") —these pieces are little miracles of observation.

LOUIS GILMORE.

IN LAWLESS LANDS

(In Lawless Lands, by Charles J. Finger. Mitchell Kennerley, 1924.)

IN fifteen short stories selected to make up a beautiful volume, Charles J. Finger has caught more of the wild beauty, tragic uncertainty and subtle irony of life than many minds sunk into the ruts of convention and self-satisfaction should care to admit if they were capable of feeling these things at all.

The book should appeal to a large audience of intelligent people, for the mind not entirely robbed of the spirit of wild places and remembered contact with earth and sea will feel in these stories the unchanging elements of truth as related to character and surroundings, the power and vividness in which moods and actions are recorded and the strange magic that glimpses the workings of an often perverse destiny behind the thin veils of the Unknown.

The characters are never merely conventional shapes. They live and have being presented in an individualized style and through a remarkably accurate psychological process. Strange things happen in a way that impresses one with utter reality and strange lands are made known by masterly selection of their characteristics, readily understandable to one who has never heard of these lands.

The short story today is much inclined to follow a sugar-teat formula. Finger's stories are brews of rare beverage, heady and deep colored. In them is the thunder of seas and the drive of winds across wide plains—for they made one drunk. Through these stories move the sometimes tragic, sometimes noble, and sometimes disgusting figures of human being and animals.

There is a dagger-like scorn for the hypocrite, the snap of keen goads over the simpering he-pollyannas, in these stories. Here is rich meat flavored with spices of magic for one who is not yet entirely spoiled by gruel and taffy.

In this time of much hysterical writing and groping away from primal values in nature, life and art it is no wonder that these stories grip the mind and stir the blood into fellowship or rebellion. Even if you do not agree with some of the themes developed it is enough that here is art that can make you feel. You will listen for undertones. The undertones are here.

I feel in these stories a stir of emo-

tions only some of which I have felt in some of Poe's tales, some of W. S. Hudson, Hardy and Conrad. I feel in them the pity and understanding of people moving in strange places, in crowds or in vastness, hoping, dreaming, loving and hating, and saved or struck down by destinies not in keeping with conventional platitudes.

Perhaps the most completely organized story is "The Shame of Gold," an authentic conception of poetic power. It is beautifully written and effective. A sketch called "Dust to Dust" is one of the most pitiful and real expressions of mortal ache that I have ever read, and "Ebro" is the history of the honest virile savage in Man pictured against the futility and weakness of the doctrine of the All-Good. "The Lizard God" is a powerful and tragic story, flashing with strange colors, and to me "Ma-Ha-Su-Ma" is a tale that is history, a lure and a warning carved in standstone and malachite set side by side in contrasting tablets.

The range of themes may seem limited to the casual reader but a remarkable variety of characters, moods, places and ideas are in evidence for one who can see clearly, and the book has more value as thoughtful and emotional art than could be squeezed from a ship-load of so-called popular fiction. I assert boldly that some of these stories will take their place in the lasting literature that will enrich future generations if our weaknesses and madness for slavery to type and convention do not cause beauty and truth to perish from the earth.

Mitchell Kennerley, New York, publishes the book—another "good deed in a naughty world."

GLENN WARD DRESBACH.

"THE LIGHT COMES BACK COLUMBINE"

(*The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Harpers, 1923.*)

MISS Amy Lowell, writing of poetry in *The New Republic,* has labeled two fresh schools. It is an old and delicious avocation of hers. This time Mr. Pound thrusts none of his slim fingers in the pie; Paris is very far away, and the *Malatesta Cantos* measure a like distance beyond the proclamations of the Imagistes. Miss Lowell and Mr. Pound may each be right. It is only that they are no longer together in their rightness.

Miss Lowell offers an opinion, expressed with qualifications, that the youngest generation in American poetry—if one excludes Hilda Conkling's —may be classed as Lyrists and Secessionists. It is not the Celtic fable of an island cloven by a wall of bronze, black sheep to the one side and white upon the other. Miss Lowell plays no favorites. The names she names are significantly few, and the name of Miss Edna St. Vincent Millay is among them.

One negates the label of a school as one negates the idea of a school: each imposes the unfair limitation of rigidity upon the stature and breadth of a living artist, not as he conceives and executes, but as his execution is conceived again in the minds of his audience. It is very well to speak of convenience and the claims of order. Criticism, one retorts, is not an exercise in efficiency, nor an excuse for indolence of mind. And one cannot respect the claims of an order which prefers to disregard the major fluidities. No one, I think, understands this better than Miss Lowell.

I drank at every vine.
The last was like the first.
I came upon no wine
So wonderful as thirst.

Miss Millay presents, now as always, the glimmering bones of emotion scraped to cleanness. Not since *Renascence* has she been concerned with the variable altitude of skies. Feet rooted in the black earth, the crumbly fragments of that earth in her hands, she obeys a passional impulse to sing. One thinks of Malory's dark Tristam: "And in his raging he took no keep of his green wound." In Edna Millay one finds always the green wound of received experience, and always that raging will to follow, over whatever hill, the lean fleet beasts of desired experience.

My heart, being hungry, feeds on food
The fat of heart despise.
Beauty where beauty never stood,
And sweet where no sweet lies
I gather to my querulous need,
Having a growing heart to feed.

There is throughout her work an amazing technical competence, the evidence of a disinterested critical faculty executing its functions with taste and a delicate ear. Her rhythms are clean and swift, as Donne's are ragged and thunderous, but these two share a community of tone, the disillusionment of emotion. Compare *The Curse* in John Donne with Edna Millay's *Curse,* and you are aware at once of a kinship more than titular.

The second section of her book is devoted to the ballad form and its variations. Herein is included the title poem, first issued by Frank Shay as a little orange booklet with decorations in line by the publisher. This *Ballad of the Harp-Weaver* returns to the clipped vernacular and lyric nonchalance of *The Singing-Woman from The Wood's Edge* but the mood is deep and tender, a very clear advance over the earlier Prior-through-Baudelaire attitude. *The Return from Town* would be Housman if Housman were Edna Millay. But *A Visit to The Asylum* could have been written by no one else. It is a childhood reminiscence; the eyes of a little girl see, and a little girl records her vision. *Humoresque* is an introspective nightmare in eight lines.

Experiments in free rhythm occupy a third part. *The Concert* is good: a conversational idiom turned to intensity. And a group headed *Sonnets* brings together nearly all the work of Miss Millay in that form. The fourteenth sonnet speaks with the tremendous austerity of that *Dirge in The Devil's Law-Case;* the eighteenth advances a plain statement which I do not think has ever been made before in poetry.

Miss May Sinclair has filed her protest against the subjective- objective mode of classification, but she presents no alternative terminology. The generation which preceded hers would have called the last sequence in *The Harp-Weaver* objective. It is titled *Sonnets from An Ungrafted Tree,* and it affects, as Morris Gnesin and his colleagues would say, "a correspondance with reality." A cerebral concept here projects itself in terms of emotion. It wears the symbolism of intimate tangible things often touched: firewood, sawdust, crocks,

oilcloth, geraniums, the body of a man. The sequence opens as that final movement of the *Unfinished Symphony* might; so very much has gone before, and there is so much to come after. The music changes. It is a grey recitative given out in some minor key; a pizzicato flickers, a bright color, and the moment swallows it.

So she came back into his house again
And watched beside his bed until he died,
Loving him not at all. The winter rain
Splashed in the painted butter-tub outside,
Where once her red geraniums had stood,
Where still their rotted stalks were to be seen.

There is no defect but an occasional too facile rhyme to bridge the interval when emotion runs thin. For Miss Millay, it is an undiscovered field with renascence in the air. She sets her foot upon the mountains.

VINCENT MCHUGH.

AN EPIC RE-CREATED

(Deirdre, by James Stephens. Macmillan, 1923.)

HERE is a tale as old as time and as modern as an aeroplane. It is James Stephens' first important prose contribution since the whimsical *Demi-Gods*. *Deirdre* is the first volume of a cycle of five. It constitutes a sort of prelude to the great Irish saga of Queen Maeve and the Tain Bo Culaigne, yet is complete in itself. This Celtic epic has engaged the attention of the earliest known bards of Eire. Outside the classic languages, it is the first tragic tale of heroic mold in the history of Europe. In recent times, Ferguson, R. D. Joyce, Douglas Hyde, A. E. Synge, and others of lesser ability have given more or less sympathetic renderings of the story. But it has remained for James Stephens to recast it in ringing heroic prose and to invest it with astounding vitality. Nor is the telling of the tale any the less beautiful because of the unmistakeable scholarship revealed by the author.

The irregularities of the otherwise admirable *Crock of Gold* and *Demi-Gods* have disappeared. *Deirdre* has an evenness and a perfection of craftsmanship, which however, in no wise constrict the sweep of the tale. A little slow of movement and a trifle restrained in the earlier chapters, the story progresses to a magnificent tragic climax.

The legendary Queen Maeve appears only in the early part of the book. After her desertion of the savage and awe-inspiring King Conachur, that chagrined monarch turns to the virginal and carefully reared young Deirdre. The girl, however, has already seen and talked with the fair young Naoise, one of the sons of Uisneac. Deirdre and Naoise elope to Scotland accompanied by his two young brothers and for seven years live as hunted creatures always on the run. Their subsequent capture and death follow through the treacherous machinations of the vindictive King Conachur. The meeting of Deirdre and Naoise is exquisite prose poetry. Conachur's story of a night wherein the King's Right was admitted while all proprieties were observed, abounds in grim humor and is gargantuan in conception:

> "Fergus and I went to bed, and the girl went to bed between us, and we all had our clothes on. My bed is small enough

> for me when I am alone, but to pack a large girl into it with all her clothes on, and then to pack an overgrown vast bullock of a man like Fergus into it also, cannot be done. I made but one resolve that night, that on no account would I be pushed out of my own bed, and I was not; but every time that Fergus closed an eye he fell on the floor and the girl woke up and screamed."
>
> Lavarcham let out a shrill titter, and begged the king's pardon. "How did Emer behave?" she asked.
>
> "She went to sleep," said Conachur sourly. "She slept hard and kicked for seven long hours; and this I know, that if she has the round knee of a woman, which she has, for it was thudded into my back a thousand times, she has also the sharp elbows of a girl, so that after a time it seemed to me that there was a bundle of live bodkins in the bed. I never knew how long a night could be until that night: and we had even to prolong it out of courtesy to the lady! I shall keep a painful memory of that sweet girl until I die . . ."

The battle scene in the last few chapters is stirring tragedy. In it are the elements of a greater moving picture than has yet been filmed. Deirdre, her husband, and four valiant companions, defy the forces of the king. While battering-rams pound, and slings and arrows fly, the beleaguered heroes leap in and out the six great doors in desperate sorties. In sudden treachery, one goes over to the besiegers. But the others fight on till fire is brought against them. In one last magnificent rush they break almost to complete freedom when magic called forth by the king's father overcomes them, and they proudly and nobly go to their doom.

The reconstruction of Celtic legends presents a formidable task for the modern writer, inasmuch as such fragmentary records have come down. But James Stephens has taken a skeleton scenario and through his magic evolved a powerful and beautiful tragic tale. Though he has faithfully followed the outlines of the epic, Stephens has escaped longwindedness, that pitfall of so many who have essayed the same kind of task.

ARTHUR MOSS.

ANTHOLOGY OF THE LOWLY

(Our Dead Selves. Anthology of the Lowly, by Paul Eldridge. Boullion Biggs, 1924.)

EXCEPT in rare instances, Paul Eldridge's poems have little sensuous charm, and frequently none. Even his finest poems are more properly mosaics of idea than harmonies. He can produce a harmony, but he seldom troubles to do so. The engrossing interest for him is thought. His kinship is with such mentalities as Whitman, Leopardi, Emerson, rather than with those carnal creatures for whom the formal art of poetry existed as a thing in itself—Heine, Milton, Horace, Catullus, say—whose evident purpose was to produce in addition to their ideas a gratuitous beauty of form. With the sensuous art of poetry Paul Eldridge has little to do. His strange and unusually fine work is valuable intellectually. He is interested in the high art of expressing thought, the art of ideas which interested Plato, Montaigne, Voltaire, and the great line of imaginative geniuses who have woven beauty out of conceptions ranged in order and sequence or merged into strange unities. Paul Eldridge is primarily a critic of life — and life we know only through images. The art of ideas, which will be the ultimate art on the eve of man's extinction or apocalypse, is unquestionably more worthy the attention of a rational being than any other, and it is more serviceable by far

in the spiritual evolution of man than the beauty of perishable forms. We will always, and rightly, honor Plato above Pindar, Whitman above Poe, Blake above Beardsley and Leonardo above Raphael.

It is in the field of ideas, the field of personality, in the great uncharted waters of symbolization in which all literature, fine art, and behaviour merge—the field of expression—that Paul Eldridge is a striking figure. He has relentlessly pursued the conception of futility and disillusion through a variety of images and woven a strange fabric of intellectual beauty to clothe the skeleton of pessimism which is his private bugaboo and which he reveres with as sincere an adoration as his Duck bestows on the "White Lady of Ducks." That his pessimism is correct, well-documented and demonstrable is undeniable. One objects, in the field of morals, to an apparent resentment against life on Mr. Eldridge's part. It is possible, after all, that life is our own invention. But the mass of images developed from the idea of pessimism by Paul Eldrige has an aesthetic value quite aside from the truth of his thesis. He is an artist in ideas.

"Our Dead Selves" is a symposium on the vanity of being in the form of post mortem reveries of half a hundred creatures other than man—including, as is highly appropriate, the giraffe, the ass, the hyena, the goose and the peacock. Many of these pieces appeared originally in *The Double Dealer* and *All's Well.* The following selections are representative:

GOAT

I butted Life,
Ceaselessly,
With my two strong horns—
My horns broke—
Life goes on,
Unscathed—
Who is this breaker of horns?

CAMEL

Were the long yellow desert beneath me,
And the long blue desert above,
And the slow, weary trudging,
Dreams of a night's sleep,
Or is this black desert,
Motionless like a dead wind,
A deep dream,
From which I shall wake
To trudge once more,
Between the long yellow desert
And the long blue desert?

GOOSE

Now that I am dead,
I may explain the mystic meaning
Of my ceaseless cackling:
I warned the world, and prophesied:
"The Sun will drown in the puddle!
The Sun will drown in the puddle!"
I was shooed,
And mocked at,
And slaughtered.
My prophecy has come to pass—
The Earth is a black desert,
The Sun lies sunken in the mud.

CRAB

The Earth crept backward,
Stumbling,
I grasped it by my pincers,
And pulled it forward,
In perfect balance.
At my death,
It sprawled upon its back
Its ten legs in the air,
Wriggling.

Eldridge's Monkey speaks of "God, the thousand-tailed One,"; his Tree still dreams of being

"changed
Into a great scarlet Rose."

His Oyster says,

"The Sea remembers me always,
And laments."

His Giraffe stretched his neck in vain after the stars and the Fish tells him:

"The stars were not up, giraffe.
The stars were in the depths of lakes.
I swallowed many."

Some of Paul Eldridge's best work is in this anthology. I have an ingrained belief that the bald intellectual beauty of his work much of which can be read as prose, like the fragments in Emerson's notebooks—is far finer than the diluted intellectual beauty of many touted poets of today, who garble, choke or smother their conceptions with faulty and irritating form.

J. M.

A DINGY LILAC BLOSSOM OF RARITY UNTOLD

(Prancing Nigger, by Ronald Firbank, with an introduction by Carl Van Vechten. Brentano's, 1924.)

THE first, to my knowledge, to do the sort of thing Mr. Firbank does, (in "Valmouth," in "Caprice," in "Vainglory," in "The Princess Zoubaroff", in "The Flower Beneath The Foot", in "Prancing Nigger"), is Beardsley in "Under The Hill". Readers of that surprising tour de force will recall its wit, its vice, its elegance, its preciosity, its fantastic décors and amazing persons.

I do not by this imply that Mr. Firbank is not an original. He is. It is simply the *genre* that is the invention of Beardsley. And Mr. Firbank is its most successful exponent. For in "Under The Hill" there are a few dull passages, whereas in Mr. Firbank's works there are none.

Among the floral decorations for the Charity Féte at the Villa Alba, (see Prancing Nigger, Chapter XII), "the orchids were the thing." And among the orchids that "claimed the greatest respect from a few discerning connoisseurs" was "Ronald Firbank, (a dingy lilac blossom of rarity untold)." Thus aptly does Ronald Firbank describe the author of his works and their admirers. But "a dingy lilac blossom of rarity untold" is most aptly the description of "Prancing Nigger," the book.

In this "study of West Indian life and manners", Mr. Firbank creates again, with variations, his very special world. It is a world utterly fantastic yet real, since consistent and harmonious in itself.

As to its story, "Prancing Nigger" is an account of the removal of the Mouth family from the little village of Mediavilla to the capital Cuna-Cuna, ("one of the chief alluring cities of the world: The Celestial city of Cuna-Cuna, Cuna, city of Mimosa, Cuna, city of Arches, Queen of the Tropics, Paradise—almost invariably travellers referred to it like that," and with the family's social advances and amorous adventures there.

The family comprises Mrs. Ahmadou Mouth, "a matron with broad, bland features, and a big, untidy figure", who, "as a young girl of eight, (Tee-hee!..) was distracting to all the gentlemen", her husband, ("Prancing Nigger" is what she calls him), a lugubrious coon given to revival meetings, Miami and Edna, "exquisite kids", and Charlie—"Attractive little Rose...!" "'What a devil of a dream...' the avid belles would exclaim when he walked abroad, while impassioned widows would whisper 'Peach'".

"'We leave Mediavilla for de education ob my daughters,' Mrs. Mouth would say; or, perhaps; 'We go to Cuna-Cuna, for de finishing ob mes filles!'"

Miami, the elder daughter, whose lover, Bamboo, is a fisherman, is loth to leave. "In what, she reflected, way would the family gain by *entering society*, and how did one enter it at all?

There would be a gathering, doubtless, of the elect (probably armed), since the best society is exclusive, and difficult to enter. And then? Did one burrow? Or charge? She had sometimes heard it said that people 'pushed' . . ."

After a farewell party, at which Mrs. Mouth, "clad in rich-hued creepers, was both looking and feeling her best," the family sets out.

The Mouths, having changed "their floral garlands for the more artificial fabrics of the town", arrive in Cuna-Cuna, and are soon domiciled in "a Villa with a water-closet". Mrs. Mouth, "who after a lifetime of contented nudity, appeared to be now almost insatiable for dress", visits, with the girls, the shops and cinemas. "Prancing Nigger" amuses himself as best he can, while Charlie joins the group of boys at a Cantonese restaurant on the Quay. There is an earthquake and a Charity Fete (for its victims) at the Villa Alba, the home of Madam Ruiz, Cuna-Cuna's social Queen. Her son, Vittorio Ruiz, having previously "seduced" Edna, now installs her in an apartment on the Avenue Messalina, while Miami, through grief at the death of her lover, Bamboo, by sharks, enters a convent. But Mrs. Mouth, ever optimistic, seated at the dinner-table with her husband, replying to his "Wen I look at our chillens chairs, an' all ob dem empty, in my opinion, we both better deaded," retorts: "I daresay dair are dose dat may t'ink so, but, Prancing Nigger, I am not like dat; no sah!"; and to his "It was a chuesd'y—God forgib dat po' frail chile."—"Prancing Nigger, I allow Edna some young yet for dat position; I allow dat to be de matteh ob de case, but, me good sah! Bery likely she marry him later."

In creating the Mouth family, Mr. Firbank has created as delightful a family as any in literature, and in Cuna-Cuna,— "Cuna, full of charming roses, full of violet shadows, full of music, full of Love, Cuna . . .!"—surely, the most delectable city!

Mr. Van Vechten has written a very able introduction which he calls "An Icing For A Chocolate Eclair."

LOUIS GILMORE.

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